

NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Annual Meeting

Minutes

April 27, 2007

The annual meeting of the Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) was called to order by Interim Vice Chair Anne Hobbs at 9:15 AM., April 27, 2007, at the Ferguson Center, 700 South 16th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Omaha World Herald and the Lincoln Journal Star on April 17, 2007, a copy of which is attached to the official minutes. Notice of this meeting and the availability of the agenda was simultaneously given to all Commissioners and available to anyone at the NCSW offices. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Commissioners Present

Kathy Bradley, Omaha
Bernadette Esposito, Omaha
Jennifer Gutierrez, Lincoln
Jolanda Junge-Kuzma, Lincoln
Anne Hobbs, Denton
Teresa Maxwell, Omaha
Kathy McKillip, Lincoln
John Nejad, Omaha
Betty Reeg, Wayne

Commissioners Absent

Susan Aguilar, Grand Island
Jill Bauermeister, Columbus
Charlene Hirsch, Broken Bow
Diane Longo, Kearney
Megan Lucas, Bellevue
Barb McPhillips, Columbus
Barb Micek, Fullerton
Rita Sanders, Bellevue
Cathy Williams, Bellevue

Government Liaison Present

Liz Hruska, Legislative Council

General Public Present

Dr. Elliot Rustad

Team Building

Commissioners participated in a teambuilding exercise.

Approval of Minutes

The following changes were proposed for the minutes of the quarterly meeting on January 26, 2007. A new motion number 8 was inserted, as follows.

Commissioners Jeanne Butler, Anne Hobbs, John Nejad and Kathy McKillip were appointed to the newly formed Settlement Committee, to negotiate a settlement with outgoing Executive Director Lisa Good.

A new motion number 9 was inserted, as follows.

Commissioners Bernadette Esposito, Jennifer Gutierrez and Jolanda Junge-Kuzma were appointed to the newly-formed Personnel Committee, to choose a new Executive Director.

All subsequent motions were renumbered consecutively.

A motion was made by Bernadette Esposito, seconded by Teresa Maxwell, and the minutes of the quarterly meeting on January 26, 2007 were approved as amended.

A motion for approval of the minutes of the special meeting on February 22, 2007 was made by Jennifer Gutierrez, seconded by Bernadette Esposito, and the minutes were approved as presented.

Financial Report

Treasurer John Nejad reviewed the Budget Status Report dated April 20, 2007, a copy of which is attached to the official minutes. A motion for approval of the Financial Report was made by Kathy McKillip, seconded by Betty Reeg, and the Financial Report was approved as presented.

Discussion of the disposition of budgeted funds unexpended as of the end of the current fiscal year (June 30) took place. Liz Hruska advised that carryover of cash funds to the next fiscal year requires approval of the legislature or the Governor's office, should the legislature not be in session. Unused NCSW appropriated funds will be returned to the state general fund at the end of the fiscal year.

The supportive relationship between the Nebraska Women's Foundation and the NCSW was discussed.

LB 321 includes a reappropriation of \$25,000 for the NCSW for the 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2009 biennium, to be restricted to travel expenses for meetings and unused employee benefits. Discussion of the inconsistencies inherent in these restrictions, notably the inability to expend funds to publish public notice of the

meetings, was discussed. Jolanda Junge-Kuzma informed the commissioners of a meeting with the Governor scheduled for Friday, May 4, to discuss NCSW's financial situation. Teresa Maxwell offered to ask her senator, Mike Friend, to sponsor an amendment to lift the restrictions on NCSW's appropriation. Commissioners were requested to contact their state senators to request retention of unexpended funds from the 2005/07 appropriation and an easing of the restrictions on use of the 2007/09 appropriation.

The Girls in Technology grant and other cash funds were also discussed. These funds are not available for the commission's use until a letter is sent requesting appropriation. We are able to request more than what is in the cash account so that as money comes in as donations, grants, etc. We will be able to access the funds without having to ask permission to do so each time. Liz Hruska suggested we request an appropriation of \$5,000.00 for each of the next 2 fiscal years. Jolanda will prepare a letter to this effect and send to Liz so that she can make this request of the Legislature.

Director's Report

Jolanda Junge-Kuzma presented the "Preliminary Notes from Auditors", a copy of which is attached to the official minutes. She reminded Commissioners of their responsibility to establish office procedures and monitor compliance. She also pointed out that some of the fixed assets noted by the auditors as missing may not have been moved from the State Office Building when NCSW relocated its office.

Jolanda Junge-Kuzma reviewed correspondence from the former Executive Director, Lisa Good's, attorney, Vincent Powers, and discussed NCSW's response.

Jolanda Junge-Kuzma informed the commissioners of Rebecca Nelms' resignation, effective March 28, 2007.

Jennifer Gutierrez announced her resignation as Co-Executive Director, effective April 30, 2007. A motion to accept her resignation was made by Betty Reeg, seconded by Teresa Maxwell, and approved.

Temporary help will be sought to staff office, organize files and format the Latino legal rights handbook. Liz Hruska confirmed that if no permanent replacement Executive Director is hired, a Commissioner may be designated to have access to NCSW's reports on the state accounting system.

Public Comment

Dr. Elliott Rustad, a physician practicing in Lincoln, addressed the Commissioners regarding his concerns on several subjects.

- Workplace absenteeism of single mothers;
- The health consequences of illegal abortion;
- The impact of the lack of sexual morality in popular culture; and
- Males' responsibility for pregnancy out-of-wedlock.

Dr. Rustad asked for the Commission's support in finding solutions to these problems.

Election of Officers

The Nominating Committee presented the following slate of officers:

Chair: Kathy McKillip

Vice Chair: Bernadette Esposito

Secretary: Anne Hobbs

Treasurer: John Nejad

A motion was made by Kathy Bradley and seconded by Jennifer Gutierrez to elect the slate by acclamation. The motion was approved.

Unfinished Business

Jolanda Junge-Kuzma and Jennifer Gutierrez reviewed progress on several projects.

- Advocacy efforts which had been made to date with the Governor and the Appropriations Committee.
- The Latino Legal Rights handbook translation is complete but needs formatting. Approximately \$2,000 in invoices from outstanding for translation services.
- Barb Micek has been working on the Displace Dreams project. She has had an amazing response from all over the State. She is finding that many, many women and families are in need of assistance and through our project awareness will be raised.
- Guidelines need to be established for selection of the Nebraska Heroine Award.

- The Women's Bureau lost their funding and is being supported with private donations. Women Work is part of the Women's Bureau. It does not appear that they will be affected by this funding cut. They are sponsoring a conference this month and have expressed interest in an ongoing relationship with NCSW.
- Copies of the NCSW Commissioner survey done during October 2006 will be distributed to new commissioners.
- The Statutes and Bylaws need revision to conform with the current mission, policies and practices. Jennifer Gutierrez, Anne Hobbs, Jolanda Junge-Kuzma and John Nejad volunteered to review them and propose updates. Liz Hruska recommended harmonizing the format and content of NCSW's governing documents with those of other state commissions and agencies. Commissioners are invited to submit their suggestions to Anne Hobbs no later than May 15.

New Business

- Teresa Maxwell reported that the Ponca Tribe is developing a program for teen girls who are the victims of abuse and domestic violence to teach computer skills. She offered to contact Tammy Buffalohead to discuss a role for NCSW in providing mentors for their students.
- New commissioners were requested to provide pictures and bios for the NCSW website.
- The most recent Annual Report had not been approved and will be removed from the NCSW website.
- Current commissioners were requested to recruit applicants for commission openings, especially from underrepresented groups, such as Hispanic-Americans, Native Americans and western Nebraskans. A job description for commissioners, which is attached to the official minutes, was distributed. New chair Kathy McKillip will draft a letter, informing all commissioners of the dates of upcoming meetings up to 18 months in advance. A policy to ask for the resignation of commissioners not actively participating will take effect as of January 2008.
- In order to facilitate operations, Kathy McKillip moved lifting the requirement for prior majority approval of expenses greater than \$500.00, effective until the July 2007 quarterly meeting, contingent upon prior e-mail notification. Kathy Bradley seconded the motion, which was approved.
- "Women of Distinction" event to be held on August 26, in conjunction with Equality Day.
- Jennifer Gutierrez made a motion to sponsor the Lincoln Lancaster Women's Commission's "Women and Money" conference, to be held during August 2007, at the \$1,000 level, contingent upon NCSW participation as a speaker or on a panel on the subject of grants for economic self-sufficiency or entrepreneurship. The motion was seconded by Jolanda Junge-Kuzma and was approved.

Upcoming Meetings

The July quarterly meeting will be held on July 27th in Omaha at St. Mary's.

Betty Reeg will make arrangements for the October 26th Quarterly Meeting, to be held on October 26 in Wayne.

Secretarial duties assumed by Bernadette Esposito from Kathy Bradley who had to leave.

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Items for discussion:

13th Annual Women's Health Symposium scheduled for Friday, May 18 in Lincoln -- \$85.00/ person; register by May 7. Let Jolanda know if you would like to attend.

"Production Tracking"—Anne Hobbs

Anne described a computer program whose purpose would be to maintain a listing of all contacts made by commissioners. This would be the start of creating a network of connections and developing outreach to many different organizations and communities across the state.

****MOTION:** Kathy McKillip moved that the NCSW implement the computer program called Connections to enable commissioners to report activity in support of the commission on a monthly basis.

****MOTION SECONDED:** John Nejad

****MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Discussion of Commission operation if not refunded—Jennifer Gutierrez

- Rebuild human capital and relationships lost over the past three years
- Serious retreat focusing on strategic plan for NCSW's future—we need direction!
- Rethink NCSW structure—look at other states and how their women's commissions/ agencies operate
- Is a "commission" still a viable means of operating in today's reality?
- Establish individual commissioners as the contact person for women and family issues within their particular district—develop viable and ongoing relationship with the public

Bernadette offered to contact a person who recently conducted a strategic planning retreat for another Board that she serves on.

****MOTION:** Kathy McKillip moved that a special meeting be called whose purpose would be being strategic planning for the future growth and development of the NCSW. Suggested date for the special meeting was May 30, 2007.

****MOTION SECONDED:** John Nejad

****MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Women of Distinction—Kathy McKillip and Jolanda Junge-Kuzma

Jolanda said she has not come across the files with candidates from prior years but will continue to look for them. If the files are found, the Women of Distinction committee will review all of them and make recommendations to the full Commission. If the files are NOT found, all commissioners will be asked to submit the name of one person at the May 30th retreat.

Committee members are Betty Reeg, Kathy McKillip and Bernadette Esposito.

MOTION: Kathy McKillip moved to adjourn the meeting.

MOTIONED SECONDED: Betty Reeg

MEETING ADJOURNED at 4:08PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Bradley and Bernadette Esposito